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- partei im bayer. Landtag 1919-1920.* (Munich: Bayer. 1920. 8 M.)
- ZIMAND, S. *Modern social movements.* (New York: H. W. Wilson. 1921. \$1.80.)
- Economic survey of certain countries specially affected by the war at the close of the year 1919.* (London: H. M. Stationery Office. 1920. Pp. 118.)
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- Information respecting the Russian soviet system and its propaganda in North America.* (Ottawa: Dept. Labour. 1920. Pp. 18.)
- Was kann Deutschland leisten?* (Berlin: Hobbing. 1920. Pp. 164.)

Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, and Fisheries

The World's Food Resources. By J. RUSSELL SMITH. (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1919. Pp. 634.)

The reviewer took up this book in the hope that the author, who is professor of economic geography in Columbia University and was officially connected with the War Trade Board during the war, would, out of the war-time interest in food supply problems, throw new light on the world's ability to feed its rapidly increasing population. This hope was by no means in vain, but the reviewer found his main object in reading the book falling into the background behind the absorbing interest of the pages which the author devotes to the geography, and the productive technique of the various actual and possible food resources, from our staple and conventional wheat, beef, and potatoes to dehydrated vegetables, Mexican peppers, Corsican acorns, Manchurian millet (twelve feet high!), esoteric tropical fruits, and the (presumably) edible pteropods "floating about in unnumbered billions waiting for some constructive servant of humanity to tell us . . . conservative landmen how good they are and how to use them." Transmuting into an organic whole technical and statistical data which must have been laboriously collected from a thousand official sources, and enlivening the whole by the results of travel, observation, and imagination, the author has crowded into five hundred octavo pages a mass of encyclopedic information which he presents in a style so rapidly flowing that one takes a sort of joy ride through the exposition, arriving one scarcely knows where or how, but with the pleasant sensation of having had an interesting and enjoyable trip. All of which is a tribute to the popular readability of a book on a dry subject which most people avoid as likely to be statistical, and is not at all necessarily an indication that the book is lacking in scientific quality. True, it lacks the show of serried ranks of statistical tables (maps and graphs serving the

author's purpose sufficiently), but one may go to the sources for these things if one thinks they will throw any considerable light on the future, which must after all be largely a matter of conjectural projection.

In the concluding hundred pages, the book comes to the point of specific interest to the population theorist—the ultimate food supply, its sources, and the social and political conditions which must exist for its production and distribution to the oncoming billions whose prospective advent strikes no terror in the optimistic author and arouses no note of protest from him. Had he simply set forth in a matter-of-fact and not (as seems sometimes the case) an overly-enthusiastic estimate of future resources, one might review the book from the standpoint of factual exposition and let it go at that. But in these last pages, and here and there throughout, are implications and viewpoints which cannot, in the reviewer's opinion, but make the book, with all its valuable call to efficient agriculture, organized marketing, and the rational socializing of production, a dangerous one in the hands of the uncritical popular reader too ready to turn a deaf ear to Malthusian warnings and still unappreciative and unfearful of the untoward results likely to flow from redundant multiplication.

The point of view of the main portion of the book seems to be a frank acceptance of the "scientific," matter-of-fact mechanicalism of the machine era, except in the concluding chapters where a point of idealism with regard to the necessary social organization brings in suggestions which, carried out in practice, would lead to socialism, or at least to a much greater amount and efficiency of social control over productive and distributive processes than anything contemplated in the present era. Expansion of the earth's population into the scores of billions is apparently looked for and approved. There is no question raised as to the value of individual life under such density, the type of culture that could survive, or the effect of such multiplication on democracy. One gathers from the discussion of the control of the tropics, however, that democracy would go by the board. There is nothing but admiration for those peoples whose unrestrained multiplication has brought them to the "ultimate garden stage" of agriculture, and no question as to what happens to the human spirit, or becomes of the things that are supposed (erroneously perhaps) to make life worth living, among those peoples in which the unprivileged masses spend all their waking time transplanting rice plants in noisome quagmires or laboriously portering soil and compost up to narrow hillside terraces held in position by masonry retaining walls. The temperate zone, brought as yet in only a few scattered spots to the garden stage, still holds boundless possibilities for increase in food production. There is no denying that the author makes out his case here—but only on an

engineering and technical basis. The economic aspect of the matter, involving the law of diminishing returns and increase in labor cost, does not much occupy his attention or deter his enthusiasm, although he does incidentally find satisfaction in the machine methods of rice production in the United States in contrast to the Oriental mode, and indulges in some speculations as to the possible applications of electricity to agriculture.

The future boundless food resources, however, will be found in the tropics. The only prerequisites to subsisting the manufacturing temperate zones off of tropical agricultural production are a teeming tropic native population and political and economic control of those prolific regions by the ruling, ascendant white man. That this would mean, as it has meant, forced labor, and a master-and-servant relation between races, the author does not seek to disguise. The British, we are told, "took possession of Bagdad in March, 1917, and immediately set the natives to work on canal digging." Phenomenal profits to be gleaned in cocoanut plantations operated with attractively low paid labor in the South Seas are noted. One wishes, however, that the author had read recently Robert Louis Stevenson, or that delightful yet sombre book of Frederick O'Brien's, *White Shadows in the South Seas*, for a more sympathetic conception of what white commercial exploitation has meant to these islands.

The white man, it is admitted, cannot stand the tropical climate. Tropic population must continue to consist almost entirely of acclimated native black, brown, and yellow races. "Left to their own desires, these men . . . have never yet developed even a second-rate power or civilization and have fallen an easy prey to colonizing [?] European powers. . . . Apparently thus only will these untouched continents yield unlimited amounts of rice and rubber . . . and a host of tropical products which we can buy with our northern goods" (p. 593). Contrary to the fears of such writers as C. H. Pearson (whose interesting book, *National Life and Character* is not, however, cited), "the white races . . . have nothing to fear from three or five or ten billions of black, brown, or yellow people in the torrid zone. They would be non-militant agriculturists, carrying out as now the instructions of white men" (p. 594). Thus, in a paragraph, are set at rest Japanese imperialistic ambitions, the yellow peril, and political insurgency in India, to say nothing of our own equivocal position in Haiti. And thus we are led blandly and almost seductively into a comfortable acquiescence in forced labor, probable peonage, and tropical exploitation, with the old, stock excuse of aggression that these people are lazy and shiftless "when left to their own desires" and that in spite of their non-militant character they always suffer, in the absence of Dutch East India Com-

panies and French colonial troops, "wars, murders, piracies, slavery and pestilences." These unfortunately backward peoples might answer with a *tu quoque* to New York state whose automobiles killed 1400 people last year, or to the city where a crime wave of unusual proportions is now raging within call of Columbia University, or to England whose coal mines alone kill an average of 1200 men a year and injure 50,000 more so that they are incapacitated for from one to three months. It is a curious fact also that the Marquesans and the Hawaiians suffered no pestilences until white traders brought them the boon of tuberculosis and syphilis, which have rendered them nearly extinct races, or that the plague, cholera, and yellow fever, against which the western world is compelled to maintain an expensive and rigid quarantine system, reap their grandest harvests in just those regions where agriculture has reached the garden stage and population the saturation point.

Having once touched upon the philosophy of the population question, it is to be regretted that the author did not look at the other side of the equation, population = food supply. Had he done so, he need not have said less about increasing food, but he probably would have found space to say something about the possible desirability of a rationally limited birth rate. That he has not done this is perhaps due to the fact that he unconsciously holds to the class, and to the race-superiority, viewpoint.

Yet that he is far from acquiescent in the present, planless, selfish, profit-motivated organization of society is evident. "If this war will teach us anything it will teach us to draw the contrast between profits and service, business and living" (p. 573). And so we are given striking illustration in some of the most suggestive of these pages of the criminal inefficiency and costliness of our unorganized marketing. The unlocking of the gates to a bountiful food supply laid down at our doors without waste and at reasonable cost awaits the advent of a society which can plan for its organic needs organically and not leave them to the tender mercies of scheming commission merchants, tenant farmers skinning the land, and suchlike undesirable citizens. Whether such organization and collective intelligence can be had short of socialism, or whether socialism itself as popularly understood could compass the task, the author does not inform us.

The discussion of the sources and future supply of fertilizers is fragmentary and unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to the problem of "permanent" agriculture. And the treatment of future sources of power seems in places fantastic. The limits to mechanical and material progress, a point so admirably brought out by Julius Wolf in his *Die Volkswirtschaft der Gegenwart und Zukunft*, 1912, is entirely overlooked.

In short, in spite of its interesting quality, its command of facts, and its undoubtable utility both as a readable book and a work of reference, the book is, from economic and ethical standpoints, deficient.

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